

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 191249Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2153

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

S E C R E T LUSAKA 1804

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: ANGOLA: ZAMBIA TAKES REALISTIC VIEW OF MPLA  
MILITARY SUPERIORITY

REF: LUSAKA 1786

1. IN HALF-HOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER  
MARK CHONA AT STATE HOUSE EVENING SEPT 18, HE RECONFIRMED  
ESSENTIALS OF MY CONVERSATION OF SEPT 17 WITH FM BANDA  
(REFTEL) ADDING THAT ZAMBIA HAS REVISED ITS ASSESSMENT  
ON ANGOLA IN LIGHT OF PRESENT REALITIES: (A) UNWORKABILITY  
OF KANANGA DECISION FAVORING SAVIMBI; (B) "HISTORIC"  
ZAMBIAN RELATIONSHIP WITH MPLA AND NETO, (C) DOMINANT  
MILITARY POSITION OF MPLA, AND (D) UNLIKELIHOOD  
SAVIMBI CAN MATCH NETO'S MILITARY GAINS BEFORE SIX  
MONTHS.

2. EXTREMELY CIRCUMSPECT, CHONA INDICATED ZAMBIANS  
HAD CALLED IN RUSSIANS TO CAUTION THEM ABOUT THEIR OPEN  
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INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA. CHONA ASKED IF USG HAD CONSIDERED

PUTTING SOVIET UNION ON NOTICE REGARDING ANGOLA IN SAME STRONG TERMS IT USED TO CAUTION RUSSIANS AGAINST "FISHING IN TROUBLED WATERS" OF PORTUGAL. WITHOUT PRESSING, CHONA SAID HE HOPED WE MIGHT SEE WISDOM OF SUCH PUBLIC WARNING.

3. I ASKED CHONA WHY PRESIDENT MOBUTU OF ZAIRE DID NOT ATTEND SEPT 13 LUSAKA SUMMIT MEETING. HE SAID DATE CHOSEN BY MOBUTU HIMSELF BUT AT LAST MINUTE EXCUSE GIVEN OF SUDDENLY HAVING TO RECEIVE BELGIAN PM. CHONA SUGGESTED PERHAPS USG COULD SHED SOME LIGHT ON HIS FAILURE TO COME TO LUSAKA. I SAID I HAD NO INFORMATION. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, CHONA SAID MOBUTU WAS ON BOARD WITH THE OTHER FOUR PRESIDENTS WHO ATTENDED LUSAKA SUMMIT IN SUPPORT OF AGREED OBJECTIVES FOR INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA ON NOV 11 AND FORMATION OF GOVT OF NATIONAL UNITY. WHAT NEEDS BE DONE WITH MOBUTU, CHONA SUGGESTED, IS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE INFLUENCE TO IMPRESS ON HIM THAT ZAIRE, LIKE ZAMBIA AND OTHER FOUR DIRECTLY CONCERNED AFRICAN STATES, SHOULD TAKE STEPS TO HAVE SOVIETS DISENGAGE FROM THEIR SUPPORT OF NETO; FURTHER TO MAKE NETO APPRECIATE LONG-TERM RISKS HE IS RUNNING IN AFRICA BY CONTINUED RELIANCE ON SUPPORT FROM SOVIET QUARTER. I QUESTIONED WHETHER THIS SUGGESTED COURSE WOULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO MOBUTU. HERE AGAIN CHONA SAID PERHAPS USG COULD MAKE ARGUMENT MORE CONVINCING. I REMINDED CHONA OF THE RECENT COURSE OF OUR RELATIONS IN ZAIRE AND FACT WE STILL HAD NO AMBASSADOR THERE.

4. CHONA THEN ADMITTED THAT WHILE MOBUTU SUPPORTED GOVT OF NATIONAL UNITY IN PRINCIPLE, HE WAS NOT PARTICULARLY COMFORTABLE WITH IDEA. BUT MOBUTU WILL ALSO HAVE TO REVISE HIS ASSESSMENT IN LIGHT OF PRESENT REALITIES. I ASKED CHONA HOW ZAMBIANS VIEW MOBUTU'S POSITION ON CABINDA. HE REPLIED THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BUT IT WAS ONE OF THOSE SUBJECTS THAT BOTH AVOIDED DISCUSSING.

5. CHONA CONCLUDED THAT ZAMBIA COULD WORK WITH NETO DRAWING ON A LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD NOT RPT NOT BEEN COMPLETELY SEVERED AND HE IMPLIED ZAMBIA INTENDED TO DO SO IN CONCERT WITH NEIGHBORING TANZANIA, MOZAMBIQUE AND BOTSWANA.

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6. ZAMBIANS HAVE NOT GIVEN UP ON SAVIMBI BUT THEY ARE COMING TO SEE HIM MORE CLEARLY AS "A SMOOTH-TALKING DIPLOMAT" WHO DOES NOT ALWAYS WALK A STRAIGHT COURSE. ZAMBIANS THOUGHT SAVIMBI HAD NOT YET BUILT UP HIS FORCES TO SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO MATCH THOSE OF MPLA'S NETO, WHO HAS PROVED HIS SUPERIORITY. PERHAPS IN SIX MONTHS TIME, CHONA WENT ON, SAVIMBI COULD BE OF COMPARABLE STRENGTH. MEANWHILE, VALUABLE TIME BEING LOST AND THERE REAL POSSIBILITY NETO COULD OPT FOR UDI

IN WHICH BOTH UNTA AND FNLA TOTALLY EXCLUDED.

7. COMMENT: I AM CONFIDENT KAUNDA STILL PRIVATELY BELIEVES SAVIMBI IS BY FAR THE BETTER LONG RUN BET FOR ANGOLA THAN NETO, EVEN THOUGH HE MAY NOW QUESTION SOME OF SAVIMBI'S CLAIMS ABOUT UNITA STRENGTH AND GAINS. I ALSO BELIEVE SAVIMBI WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY KAUNDA'S COVERT SUPPORT TO HELP KEEP HIM IN THE RUNNING. KAUNDA IS UNEASY ABOUT GROWING SOVIET ROLE IN ANGOLA IN SUPPORT OF MPLA AND WHOLE-HEARTED WAY IN WHICH MPLA LEADERS HAVE APPAREARED TO EMBRACE MARXIST IDEOLOGY WHICH KAUNDA ABHORES. CHONA'S RATIONALIZATION ABOUT PRESENT REALITIES FAVORING MPLA REFLECTS THEREFORE LESS A SWING AWAY FROM SAVIMBI THAN IT DOES A RECOGNITION THAT AT PRESENT TIME SAVIMBI'S MILITARY SITUATION DOES NOT LOOK VERY ENCOURAGING. AT SEPT 13 SUMMIT IN LUSAKA, CONFRONTED WITH HARD PRO-NETO LINE TAKEN BY NYERERE AND MACHEL AND SUPPORTED BY LOPEZ, KAUNDA FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO REFUTE FACTS THAT MPLA'S MILITARY POSITION CLEARLY SUPERIOR AT PRESENT TIME TO EITHER OF ITS OPPONENTS. A PRAGMATIST, KAUNDA SURELY SAW EXPEDIENCY OF NOT PRESSING OPENLY FOR SAVIMBI AGAINST NETO AND THEREBY ALIENATING LATTER WHEN HE ON TOP; AND OF MAINTAINING A UNITED FRONT WITH HIS TANZANIAN AND MOZAMBICAN ALLIES ON WHOSE PORTS ZAMBIA ENTIRELY DEPENDENT SO LONG AS ROUTE TO LOBITO REMAINS CLOSED.

8. IN AGREEING TO URGE ON ANGOLAN LEADERS STILL ANOTHER TRY AT FORMING GOVT OF NATIONAL UNITY--BUT ONE IN WHICH MPLA WILL HOLD PREPONDERANCE OF PORTFOLIOS--KAUNDA IS DOING HIS BEST TO PRESERVE SOME ROLE FOR UNITA IN TRANSITIONAL GOVT. IF SUCCESSFUL, INCLUSION OF UNITA AND PERHAPS FNLA ELEMENTS, EVEN IN MINORITY, MAY IN KAUNDA'S EYES HELP BALANCE INFLUENCE OF EXTREME LEFTISTS

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WITHIN MPLA. EVEN IF FIVE PRESIDENTS' EFFORTS PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY GOVT ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL, KAUNDA MAY HOPE NEGOTIATIONS WILL HAVE EFFECT OF SLOWING DOWN MPLA MILITARY DRIVE AND THUS GAIN ADDITIONAL TIME FOR SAVIMBI TO ARM AND STRENGTHEN HIS FORCES.

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